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Contact: Bridget Gonzales
(202) 482-3774

**HOWARD H. LI NAMED CHAIR
NATIONAL MINORITY ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (MED) WEEK 2005 CONFERENCE**

Washington, D.C., March 9, 2005 – The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is pleased to announce Howard Li, Chairman and CEO, Waitex International Company, as Chair of the National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week 2005 Conference. Mr. Li is the first Asian American entrepreneur in twenty-three years to lead the conference steering committee and recently convened his first meeting with MED Week 2005 partners and staff in Washington, DC.

“On behalf of MBDA and all our corporate, government agency and non-profit partners, I am delighted that Howard Li has stepped forward to lead the National MED Week 2005 Conference,” said Ronald N. Langston, MBDA National Director. “Howard has served faithfully as a Co-chair of the National MED Week Conference for the past three years and he represents the best of what our nation’s minority entrepreneurs have to offer America-- wealth creation, jobs, innovative business services, satisfied customers, global impact and a generous spirit.”

Established by Presidential Proclamation in 1983, the National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference is the preeminent business observance that encompasses all sectors of the minority business community including the private, non-profit and government sectors. The conference promotes and celebrates the vital role minority businesses play in generating wealth, creating jobs and strengthening our nation’s economy. It also serves as a forum to discuss the issues, trends and strategies affecting minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs).

“I am honored to assume the position of Chair, National MED Week 2005 Conference. Our goal is to inspire entrepreneurs to grow, to take their businesses to the next level and to celebrate the achievements minority businesses owners have already realized. With the support of my very experienced corporate Co-Chairs, the continued commitment from our full circle of partners, and the dedication of the National MED Week 2005 Conference staff, I am confident we will exceed even our own expectations,” said Howard Li, Chair, National MED Week 2005 Conference.

Along with Mr. Li, the National MED Week 2005 Conference will be led by:

- **Chair Emeritus**, Benita Fortner, Director of Supplier Diversity, Raytheon Company, Long Beach, CA;
- **Co-Chair**, Ms. Andra M. Rush, President & CEO, Rush Trucking, Inc., Wayne, MI;
- **Co-Chair**, Massey Villarreal, CEO, Precision Task Group, Inc., Houston, TX; and
- **Corporate Chair and Co-Chair**, Brenda Schneider, First Vice President and Director of Business Development Services, Comerica Bank, Detroit, MI.

This year's conference theme, ***"The Art of the Deal: Making It Happen"*** was chosen to emphasize the tools, techniques and strategies for entrepreneurial growth and success. The conference will be held September 11-14, 2005 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The National MED Week 2005 Conference will feature a matchmaking session for minority owned businesses, a series of White House briefings, educational workshops, a business EXPO and the 23rd Annual Minority Business Entrepreneur Awards Gala. There is also a conference track designed specifically for aspiring young entrepreneurs that culminates in a national business plan competition where the students compete for prizes. To learn more about the National MED Week 2005 Conference and to register, visit www.medweek.gov.

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), a part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the only Federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in America. MBDA actively coordinates and leverages public and private sector resources to promote the growth and competitiveness of large, medium and small minority business enterprises. Through a network of minority business development centers in areas with the largest concentration of minority populations and the largest number of minority businesses, MBDA offers minority entrepreneurs one-on-one assistance with a wide range of services, including: business development, education and technical assistance, access to capital and procurement opportunities, marketing and strategic alliances. The location of minority business development centers can be found at www.mbda.gov.

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